

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
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TAGS: SREF ZA
SUBJ: AFRICAN REFUGEES - ZAMBIA VISIT

REF: STATE 125887

1. EMBASSY QUESTIONS THE NEED OF YET ANOTHER ON-THE-SPOT ASSESSMENT OF REFUGEE REQUIREMENTS IN ZAMBIA. DURING THE PAST YEAR THE SUBJECT HAS BEEN STUDIED, REPORTED ON, AND ANALYZED DURING VISITS BY SHEPARD LOWMAN OF D/HA/ORM (JUNE-JULY 1977), A MISSION HEADED BY AMBASSADOR CLARK (SEPTEMBER 1977), AND A THREE-MAN AFRICARE TEAM FUNDED BY AID (MARCH 1978). IN ADDITION, A NUMBER OF CONGRESSIONAL VISITORS HAVE ALSO LOOKED SPECIFICALLY INTO REFUGEE MATTERS (E.G., SENATE STAFFER FREEMAN, CONGRESSMAN SOLARZ, AND CHAIRMAN DIGGS AND PARTY). WHILE THE NUMBER OF REFUGEES IN ZAMBIA HAS INCREASED OVER THE PAST YEAR, THEIR SITUATION AND NEEDS HAVE NOT CHANGED SIGNIFICANTLY. AS AMBASSADOR CLARK'S REPORT POINTED OUT, "...PRACTICALLY ALL REFUGEES

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IN ZAMBIA ARE RECEIVING REASONABLE CARE AND SUPPORT WITH VERY FEW IN DIRE STRAITS."

2. EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT SUFFICIENT INFORMATION SHOULD EXIST IN THE REPORTS MENTIONED ABOVE, ALONG WITH FURTHER DOCUMENTATION READILY AVAILABLE FROM SOURCES SUCH AS UNHCR, ICRC, AND LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION, TO DETERMINE REFUGEE

ASSISTANCE REQUIREMENTS IN ZAMBIA AND DEVELOP A US PROGRAM TO HELP BETTER MEET THOSE REQUIREMENTS. FURTHERMORE, WE WOULD CONJECTURE THAT ANOTHER VISIT OF THIS NATURE, NO MATTER HOW LOW-KEY, WOULD BE LIKELY AGAIN TO RAISE EXPECTATIONS OF ASSISTANCE WHICH MIGHT BE DIFFICULT TO REALIZE, AS HAS BEEN THE CASE IN THE PAST. DESPITE THE LOWMAN, CLARK, AND AFRICARE MISSIONS, THEREG IS YET TO BE ANY TANGIBLE ASSISTANCE FROM THE USG EITHER FOR ZAMBIA OR FOR THE REFUGEES.

3. DESPITE THE FOREGOING, IF THE MARINELLI TEAM DECIDES THERE STILL EXISTS A NEED TO VISIT ZAMBIA, WE WILL, OF COURSE, BE GLAD TO TRY TO ARRANGE ALL NECESSARY APPOINTMENTS AND BE OF FULL ASSISTANCE. WE WISH TO POINT OUT, HOWEVER, THAT THE TIME-TABLE PROPOSED REFTEL PRESENTS SEVERAL PROBLEMS. IN THE FIRST INSTANCE, JULY 3 AND JULY 4 ARE BOTH ZAMBIAN HOLIDAYS AND WITH TWO FOUR-DAY WEEKEND, MANY PEOPLE WHOM THE TEAM SHOULD MEET MIGHT BE UNAVAILABLE. THE VISIT WOULD INCLUDE ONLY ONE WORKDAY. IT WOULD ALSO BE UNLIKELY THAT WE WOULD BE ABLE TO ARRANGE
A VISIT TO
THE MAJOR REFUGEE CAMP AT MAHEBA IN NORTHWESTERN PROVINCE BECAUSE OF THE HOLIDAYS. IN ADDITION, THE VISIT WOULD COME IN THE MIDST OF OUR POST INSPECTION (JUNE 29 - JULY 10), AND THUS OUR OWN FACILITIES WILL BE STRAINED AT THE TIME.
CLINGERMAN
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